

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 5935

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, UN (VIETNAM)

SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH VICTOR UMBRIGHT

REF: GENEVA 5009

1. AT LUNCHEON JULY 23, DCM AND MISSION OFFICER WERE GIVEN FOLLOWING RUNDOWN BY VICTOR UMBRIGHT, SECRETARY-GENERAL WALDHEIM'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE, REGARDING HIS RECENT ACTIVITIES IN MOBILIZING AND COORDINATING AID TO VIETNAM.

2. HE IS NOW ABOUT MIDWAY THROUGH HIS ROUND OF PLANNED CONTACTS WITH 40-45 KEY POTENTIAL DONORS TO AN INTERNATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION EFFORT FOR VIETNAM. AMONG OTHERS HE HAS THUS FAR CONTACTED ARE CANADA, MEXICO, VENEZUELA, NIGERIA, UK, FRANCE, BELGIUM, NETHERLANDS, SWITZERLAND, FRG, ITALY, THE EC-9 COMMISSION, AND LIBYA. HE LEAVES JULY 24 FOR IRAN, SYRIA, IRAQ AND PROBABLY KUWAIT AND AFTER A SHORT BREAK PLANS TO VISIT THE SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES, AND THEN THE USSR, POLAND, YUGOSLAVIA AND ROMANIA. LATER IN AUGUST HE WILL VISIT ASEAN COUNTRY CAPITALS AND JAPAN (AT GOJ REQUEST). HE PLANS TO MAKE ADDITIONAL CONTACTS AT THE COLOMBO CONFERENCE OF NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES IN AUGUST AND ALSO PLANS EITHER TO HAVE SUBSTANTIVE TALKS WITH THE VIETNAMESE THERE OR TO GO ON TO HANOI AFTER THE CONFERENCE.

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3. HIS CONTACTS THUS FAR HAVE BEEN UNIVERSALLY SYMPATHETIC TO VIETNAM'S RECONSTRUCTION NEEDS AND SEEM CLEARLY DISPOSED (ALTHOUGH APPARENTLY NONE HAVE SO FAR MADE SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS) TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO VIETNAM. THEY ALL INDICATED, HOWEVER, THAT WHEN AND IF THEY DO SO IT WOULD BE ON A BILATERAL BASIS AND WHILE SOME TYPE OF UN COORDINATING OR OTHER ROLE IS NOT EXCLUDED AT THIS POINT, HIS CONTACTS WERE UNEQUIVOCAL IN STRESSING THE IMPORTANCE THEY ATTACH TO HAVING THEIR AID RELATIONSHIP WITH VIETNAM EVOLVE IN A BILATERAL CONTEXT. IF A CONSORTIUM TYPE OF ARRANGEMENT SHOULD BECOME FEASIBLE AT SOME POINT, UMBRIGHT IS CONVINCED IT WOULD HAVE TO BE UNDER THE WORLD BANK'S LEADERSHIP AND SAID THAT HE HAD SO ADVISED THE VIETNAMESE. ACCORDING TO UMBRIGHT, THE VIETNAMESE INTEND TO RETAIN THEIR MEMBERSHIP IN THE WORLD BANK AND THE IMF, AND AS EVIDENCE OF THIS POINTED TO THE FACT THAT, ACTING ON ONE OF HIS RECOMMENDATIONS, THEY HAVE NOW INVITED AN IMF MISSION TO HANOI. (HE SAID HE THOUGHT THAT THIS MISSION WAS ACTUALLY IN HANOI AT THE PRESENT TIME.)

4. UMBRIGHT WAS NOT CLEAR ON HOW HE EXPECTED THE SITUATION TO EVOLVE OVER THE COMING WEEKS AND MONTHS. HE GAVE EXPLICIT ASSURANCES HOWEVER THAT THE SECRETARY GENERAL WOULD NOT CALL ANY INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF POTENTIAL DONORS IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE SINCE HE RECOGNIZES THAT WITH THE U.S. ABSENT FROM SUCH A MEETING AN EXERCISE OF THAT TYPE WOULD PROBABLY PRODUCE SHRAP POLITICAL ATTACKS ON THE U.S. AND BE HIGHLY COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. IT IS THIS PROSPECT, HE SAID, WHICH HAS KEPT WALDHEIM FROM CALLING SUCH A MEETING THUS FAR.

5. UMBRIGHT EXPRESSED COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF THE U.S. POSITION, AS CONVEYED TO HIM AND TO WALDHEIM IN THE PAST, AND SAID HE HAS STRONGLY URGED THE VIETNAMESE TO MOVE FORWARD ON THE MIA PROBLEM (WHICH HE IS CONVINCED IS THE MAIN STUMBLING BLOCK TO IMPROVED U.S.-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS) AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO IN THE FUTURE. HE SAID HE BELIEVES THE VIETNAMESE ARE COMPLETELY IN THE WRONG ON THIS ISSUE AND THAT HE HAS TOLD

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THEM SO. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE CONTINUES TO WISH FERVENTLY FOR SOME SIGN HE COULD CONVEY FROM THE U.S. THAT A VIETNAMESE GESTURE ON THE MIA'S WOULD BE TANGIBLY RECIPROCATED BY US, WHICH HE THINKS MIGHT HELP TO RESOLVE THE CURRENT IMPASSE. WE, OF COURSE, GAVE HIM ANY ENCOURAGEMENT ON THIS SCORE. HE EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THE NEXT SIX MONTHS ARE CURCIAL IF THE VIETNAMESE ARE TO BE ENCOURAGED TO MOVE AWAY FROM DEPENDENCE ON USSR

AND CHINA AND THAT U.S. IS KEY.

6. UMBRIGHT HAS PROMISED TO KEEP US CLOSELY INFORMED OF
FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS.ABRAMS

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